spirits of the season?

NOVEMBER 1982

DRIVER

a Foot in EUROPE

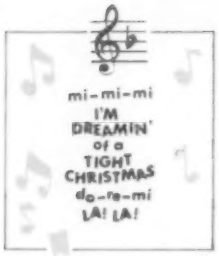
photo by Rick Schneblin

DRIVER

Spirits of the Season?

When you hear the expressions "holiday cheer" and "spirit of the season" do you think of alcohol? If so, you're not alone. For many Americans the end-of-year holiday season, from Thanksgiving through New Year's, is the time for a string of parties — parties that always involve drinking. Nothing so bad about that, we guess, but when the party-goers try to drive home while registering a high blood alcohol content, often they don't make it.

Of course, if somebody wants to go to a party and drink that's his business, but when he gets behind the wheel of a car he's not only endangering his own life, he's endangering the lives of innocent people. Drunk drivers kill more than 25,000 people each year in the U.S. and injure hundreds of thousands more.

We've now reached that time of the year popularly called "The Holidays" because three important celebrations, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's, come so close together. Since those celebrations so often include drinking too much, we've rewritten a few holiday songs around the theme of drinking and driving.

Warbled by: The Drunkch who drank Christmas

And New Year's and Thanksgiving, the 4th of July, and all of August . . .

For Christmas (to the tune of "Walking in a Winter Wonderland"):

by JERI ROOD

Tires squeal
Are ya list'ning?
At the wheel
Eyes are glist'ning.
A frightening sight;
He's wasted tonight,
Driving on a belly fulla booze

Far away is his right mind;
Here today is the tight kind.
He sings a drunk song
As he weaves along,
Driving on a belly fulla booze

In the city park he'll hit a snowman
And he will be stopped by Officer Brown,
Who'll say "You been drinking?"
He'll say, "No, man."
But when he leaves the car he'll just fall down.

Later on, he will wail,
As he sits in the jail,
To think how he's paid
For the blunder he made —
Driving on a belly fulla booze.

ness. But if he gets into his car and starts the engine while he's under the influence of alcohol, it becomes everybody's business. He is then a lawbreaker, a dangerous person, and even a potential killer.

Yes, "killer." Over 50,000 people die in traffic accidents each year in the United States and in half of these deaths a drunk driver is involved. That comes down to about 70 people every day who are killed in drunk driver-related crashes, or about three every hour, every day, all year.

Of course, that's an average. Some days have more traffic deaths than others. The National Safety Council says that the highway death rate is 13 percent higher on holidays than for non-holidays at the same time of the year.

You can bet that drunk drivers account for more than their "share" of those deaths.

For these reasons there is a "war" against drunk drivers being fought at all levels in the country, from the local to the national. Citizen's groups such as "Mothers Against Drunk Drivers" (MADD) and "Remove Intoxicated Drivers" (RID) are lobbying for more energetic enforcement of drunk driving laws and tougher penalties for convicted drunk drivers. The president has established a commission to come up with recommendations to battle the drunk driving problem.

We want to talk about the end-of-year drink-ins, but first you'll need some general information on the cause of all this official concern.

The culprit: The problem is that people insist on driving under the influence of one of the most common dangerous drugs in the world — alcohol. Alcohol is not usually thought of as a drug, but it is a depressant of the central nervous system otherwise called ethyl alcohol or ethanol.

Alcohol relaxes the user. First it relaxes the judgment and the thinking, causing the drinker to have a faulty perception of his condition. (He usually thinks he's sober.) More alcohol in the body makes him drowsy, slows his reaction time, dulls his senses and messes up his coordination and balance. If he keeps on drinking, everything conks out and he loses consciousness.

For legal purposes, there is a measure of the amount of alcohol in a person's bloodstream. This is the Blood Alcohol Level (BAL) or Blood Alcohol Content (BAC), which is simply the percentage of alcohol in the blood. One tenth of one percent of alcohol in the blood (one part alcohol for every 1000 parts of blood) is the legal level of intoxication in most areas in the U.S. Some places, especially overseas, the level is even lower. It is abbreviated .1 BAL or .1 BAC.

That's the legal definition. People are individuals, and some people will be out of control long before they reach .1 BAL. Generally, between .01 and .05 BAL (that's one and five hundredths of a percent) a person will show few signs of drunkenness except some loss of restraint and concentration. Between .05 and .1, judgment and coordination will be messed up, and vision will be affected.

As we said, people are individuals. Some will reach that legal limit faster than others.

continued

For Thanksgiving (to the tune of "Over the River and Through the Woods"):

Over the sidewalk and through the fence,
Through Grandmother's house we crash.
A drunk's at the wheel
Of two tons of steel;
His head's full of sour mash

Over the teeth and past the gums —
Oh, how the booze did flow!
It dulled his pain
And fogged his brain
And left him with a glow.

Over the dashboard and through the glass.
Too bad he didn't think —
There's no way to drive
And arrive alive
When you've had too much to drink.

DRIVER

THE
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FOR THE MILITARY DRIVER

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THE EDITOR SPEAKS

DOUBLE CLUTCH

AUTOMATIC RESTRAINTS: ARE THEY REALLY COMING?

In the past five years we've devoted at least six of these columns to "automatic restraints," shorthand for air bags and belts that automatically buckle you up when you close the car door. Each time that we've printed the very latest, positively final information for you, somebody somewhere has done something to change the picture, and we've had to come back next issue and say "Hold, the phone! That's not the way it's going to be after all."

It all started in 1977, when the federal government said automatic restraints were to be standard in all new cars starting with 1982 models. That rule was postponed until 1983 models. Then in late 1981, the Department of Transportation rescinded the standard, saying that circumstances had changed since the standard was issued and that auto makers were going to install detachable automatic belts. The insurance industry didn't like that, so they challenged the recission in federal court. A U.S. Court of Appeals told the DOT to reinstate the automatic restraint standard, starting with 1984 models. DOT has appealed that order to the Supreme Court. Insiders in the traffic safety business don't believe the Supreme Court will overturn the lower court ruling. It now seems sure that if you buy a new car in '84, you'll get an air bag or an automatic belt system.

Why all the back-and-forth activity? Well, people opposed to automatic restraints say air bags are expensive and protect only in crashes at the front quadrant, that automatic belts will be rendered inoperative by owners, and what we really need is for people to use the shoulder-lap combinations we already have. Those in favor of the ruling say since people won't use the restraints they already have, we must do something else about the senseless slaughter on our roads.

Big question: Will American car makers opt for air bags in a big way? If they go for the passive belts instead of the bags, could the European and Japanese makers decide on air bags and score a marketing coup? No doubt we'll have more columns on this amazing subject of automatic restraints.

spirits of the season?

continued

Body weight and drinking rate: Two factors that affect the speed with which you get drunk are your body weight and the amount you drink. The larger you are, the slower you become intoxicated. The more you drink the drunker you get. Those are obvious.

Perhaps less obvious is the fact that if you have a full stomach, you will get drunk slower. The food will compete with the alcohol for the digestion process and the booze won't get into the bloodstream so fast. (It *will* all get there, but just a little slower.)

The drinking rate also affects the speed with which you get drunk, and this is also obvious. But all the time you're drinking, your body is working on getting the liquor out. The human liver can handle a little alcohol at a time, enough to lower the Blood Alcohol Level by .015 each hour. What this means is that if you drink slowly enough, you will not reach the legal intoxication level.

continued

BAL CHART

	1 Drink				2 Drinks				3 Drinks				4 Drinks			
After hours	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
Weight pounds																
80	—	—	—	.02	—	—	.05	.08	.07	.10	.10	.10	.12	.12	.15	.15
100	—	—	—	.02	—	—	.04	.06	.05	.07	.08	.09	.09	.10	.12	.13
120	—	—	—	.02	—	—	.03	.04	.03	.04	.06	.08	.06	.08	.09	.11
140	—	—	—	.01	—	—	.02	.04	.02	.03	.05	.06	.04	.06	.08	.09
160	—	—	—	.01	—	—	.02	.03	.01	.02	.04	.05	.03	.04	.06	.08
180	—	—	—	.01	—	—	.01	.03	—	.02	.03	.04	.02	.04	.05	.07
200	—	—	—	—	—	—	.01	.02	—	.01	.03	.04	.01	.03	.04	.06

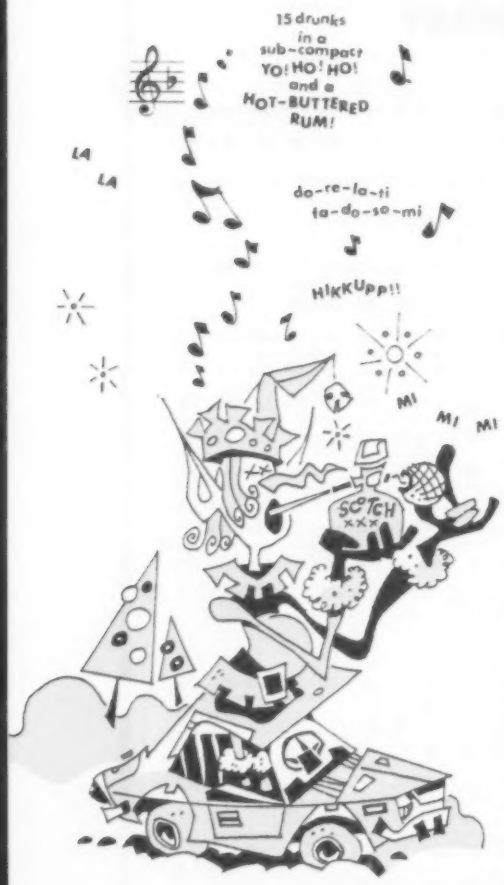
	5 Drinks				6 Drinks				7 Drinks				8 Drinks			
After hours	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
Weight pounds																
80	.17	.17	.19	.20	.19	.22	.22	.25	.25	.27	.27	.30	.29	.30	.32	.33
100	.13	.14	.16	.17	.16	.18	.19	.21	.20	.22	.23	.25	.24	.25	.27	.28
120	.09	.11	.13	.14	.13	.14	.16	.17	.15	.17	.19	.20	.19	.20	.22	.23
140	.07	.09	.10	.12	.10	.12	.13	.15	.13	.14	.16	.17	.15	.17	.18	.20
160	.06	.07	.09	.10	.08	.09	.11	.13	.10	.12	.13	.15	.13	.14	.16	.17
180	.04	.06	.07	.09	.06	.08	.09	.11	.09	.10	.12	.13	.11	.12	.14	.15
200	.03	.04	.06	.08	.05	.07	.08	.09	.07	.09	.10	.12	.09	.10	.12	.13

Numbers equal the percentage of alcohol in the blood. Dash (—) = a trace of alcohol.

Use this chart as a guide to tell you how much you can drink. The chart supposes that you've eaten, and are drinking an "average" drink. BALs for people with empty stomachs, and for those drinking more potent drinks (martinis, manhattans, "doubles," and the like) will be higher.

That's an important fact to know if you want to keep on the good side of the law and avoid hurting yourself — and others — in a drunken crash. We have included a chart which shows the Blood Alcohol Level, based on weight, amount of alcohol consumed and speed of drinking.

Slow down: According to the chart, a 160-pound person will be legally intoxicated if he has five drinks in one hour. That's pretty fast drinking. If he has only two drinks an hour, he will still be legally drunk in four hours. Take a look at the chart and you'll see that the only way to remain on the low side of .1 BAL is to have less than one drink per hour. So if you go to any parties, make sure you have other things to do besides drink. Try eating or conversation.



We also want to warn you that .1 BAL is only a legal definition. Many people — smaller people, those not accustomed to alcohol, or those with a high susceptibility to it — are unable to drive safely after only a couple of drinks.

So if you have gone beyond the limit and have drunk too much for safe driving, what can you do? There are all sorts of quick "cures" for drunkenness, but none of them work. You can drink all the coffee you want, or take cold showers or breathe oxygen, or whatever you like. It won't work, beyond perhaps making you more awake. Your body will only handle that .015 percent of the alcohol each hour. Time is the only antidote to too much alcohol. So go ahead and drink coffee, eat, talk to friends. It'll help chew up the time as you wait to sober up.

We think you can see from this information what your duties are as a party-goer — take it easy and know your limit, based on the chart. Now we want to talk to you as a host, in case you decide to throw a party during the holiday season.

It's party time! You're throwing a party (Christmas, New Year's or whatever) for your friends and you have certain responsibilities as host. You want your guests to have a good time; that's one responsibility. Another is to have enough food and refreshments and the like.

This responsibility leads to another — the responsibility to make sure that none of your guests are drunk when they put the key in the ignition to drive home. Drunks who drive cause accidents. They hurt or kill other people and themselves. The people at your party are your friends and we know you'd like to keep them alive so they'll invite you to *their* next party. Friends don't let friends drive drunk.

The first thing you should make clear at the party is that its okay not to drink. At some parties a non-drinker feels as out of place as E.T., but you as host can handle that. Don't force a drink on anyone and don't let any of the other guests do it either. Have non-alcoholic drinks available.

Have plenty of food at the party. As we've already explained, food slows down the rate at which alcohol is absorbed into the system. It works another way too — the act of eating takes up time and cuts down on the amount the guest can drink. If there is food, drinking alcohol won't become the center of the evening. After all, the idea is for them to have a good time, not just to get loaded.

I spy: To make sure your guests aren't drunk when they leave, you have to know how much they are taking in and the only way to do that is to watch. If somebody looks drunk, you should switch him to soft drinks. Those who aren't used to alcohol will be more likely to show its effects sooner — and even to get ill from drinking. But behavior alone won't tell you if someone is getting drunk.

For example, with four drinks in their systems, 65 out of 100 people will be too intoxicated to drive safely. However, only 20 of them will show it. The other 45 will look fine, but will really be as bad off as the 20 who act drunk.

So you have to watch the number of drinks each person is taking in. That's much simpler if the party is a small one, but more difficult in a large group or if you (as host) have to move around a lot.

A good way to control the amount of booze each person consumes is to have a bartender. With one person mixing the drinks you can be sure that nobody is drinking "doubles" and you have someone who can keep count on the amount any one person is downing.

And you should close the bar before the end of the party. For the reasons we've explained, the guests will need time for their bodies to handle the booze they've drunk, so give

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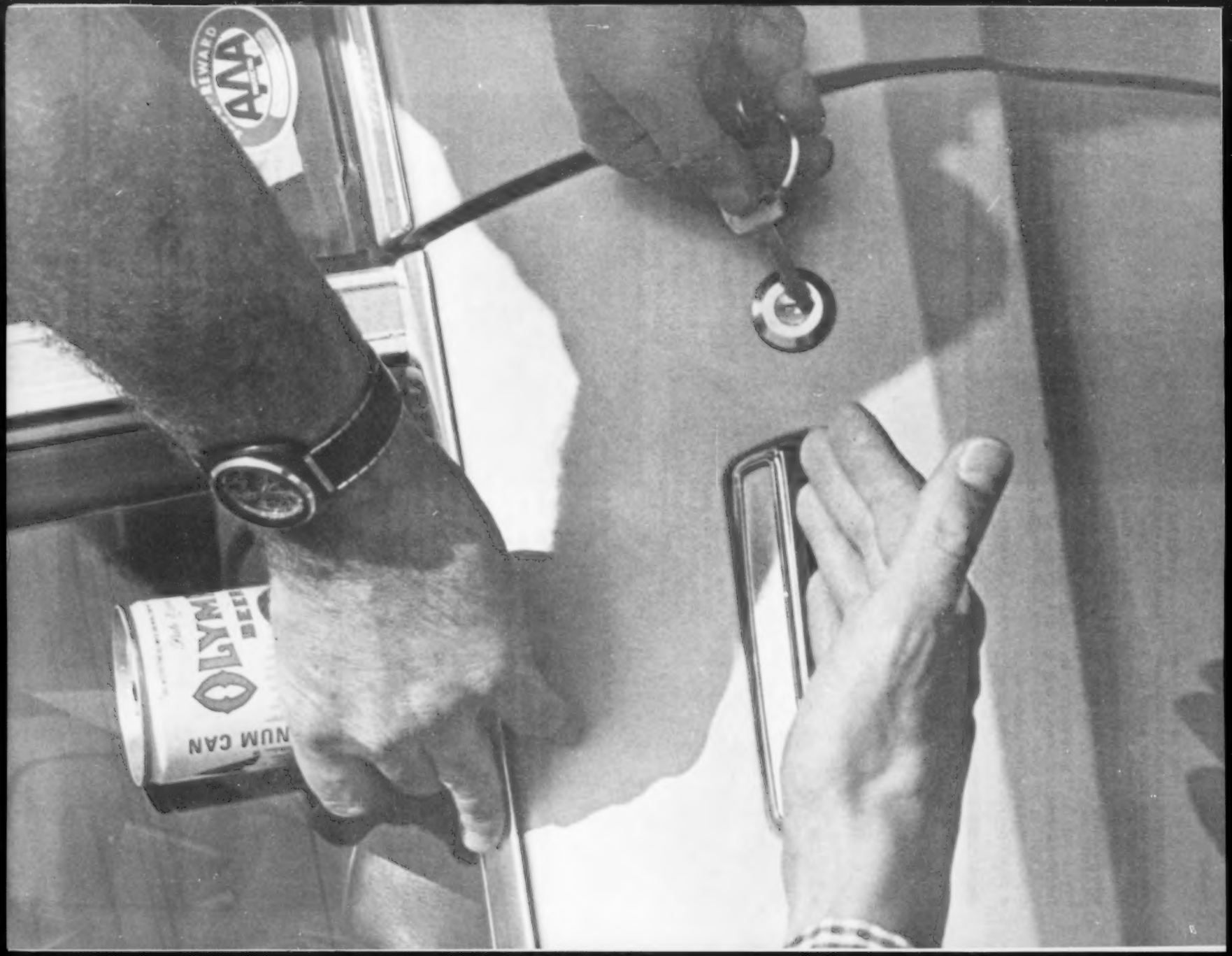
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spirits of the season?

continued

them that time. Keep them interested in staying by having some really good food at the end of the party, after the last of the alcohol. Have some coffee too, but remember it doesn't do anything to sober anyone up, beyond the time it takes to drink it.

Sleep it off: Even so, despite your best efforts, you might end up with guests who think they're ready to leave but can't stand without weaving. Use your reasoning ability on them and persuade them to stay until they are sober. Get them interested in conversation. Provide them a place to lie down and sleep for a while. Or persuade them to sleep over until the next morning.

It's best to plan for problems like this. The best way is to arrange beforehand with some of the guests — persuade some to drink soft drinks at the party and drive the others home. Perhaps they can arrange to have the others return the favor at the next party.

If all else fails, you as the host should be prepared to drive the intoxicated party-goers home. And that means you should think seriously about staying sober at your party. Calling a cab is another excellent idea.

What happens if everything fails and somebody wants to drive home on a head full of alcohol? You may have no choice but to take his keys away. Don't let him get in the car.

A couple of examples from Air Force accident reports will show what happens when the drunk is allowed to leave.

An airman who had been drinking at a party got on his motorcycle to go home. He was showing off and friends tried to persuade him he couldn't drive safely. He left anyway. Two miles away he took a curve at a high rate of speed and hit a light pole and then a sign. He was killed.

Another airman left a party to drive his car home. A friend, who had also been drinking, tried to talk him out of it. When that failed, he lay on the hood of the airman's car. The airman drove around the block and then back into the driveway. He applied the brakes and his friend slid off the hood, suffering severe head injuries. He died later in the hospital.

Take charge: These are not the light-hearted experiences people like to think about when they consider giving or attending a holiday party.

For New Year's (to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne"):

Should drinking limits be forgot
And you drive your car for fun,
We really hope that you get caught
Before you kill someone.

Before you kill someone, my dear,
Before you kill someone —
Go take some time and sober up,
Before you kill someone.

"PADD"

In the accompanying article, we have talked a lot about the responsibilities of the host at a party. The guests at the party also have responsibilities. Perhaps you guests should start your own organization — "Partyers Against Drunk Drivers."

Here is a list of the rules:

1. Don't drink too much

2. Don't drink too fast — space out your drinking to one per hour, less if you're a small person

3. Eat before and during the party

4. Watch what you drink — know what, and how much, is in the glass

5. Don't drive until you've waited a while, even if you feel sober

6. Don't ride with anyone who's had too much to drink

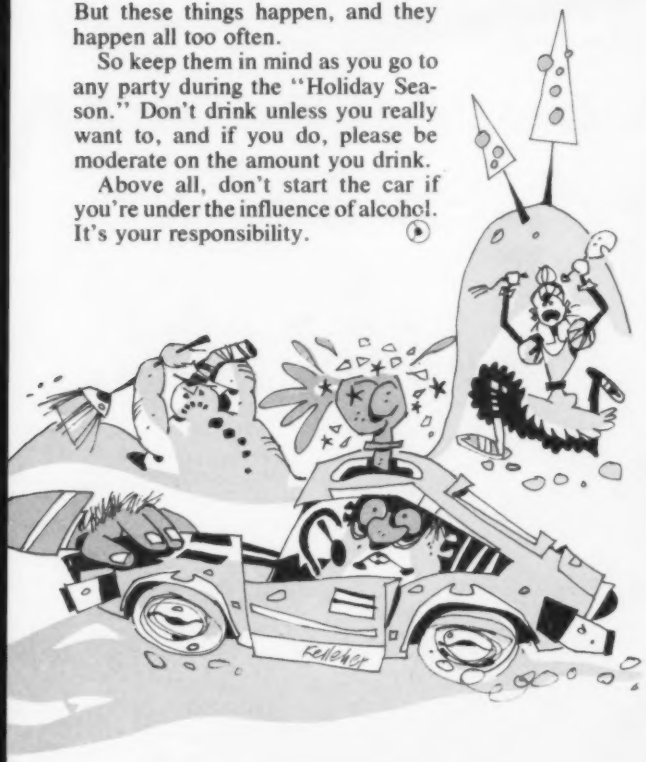
7. Don't allow a friend to drive if he's drunk

8. To guard against drunk drivers, wear your seat belt and insist that all of your riders do also.

But these things happen, and they happen all too often.

So keep them in mind as you go to any party during the "Holiday Season." Don't drink unless you really want to, and if you do, please be moderate on the amount you drink.

Above all, don't start the car if you're under the influence of alcohol. It's your responsibility.

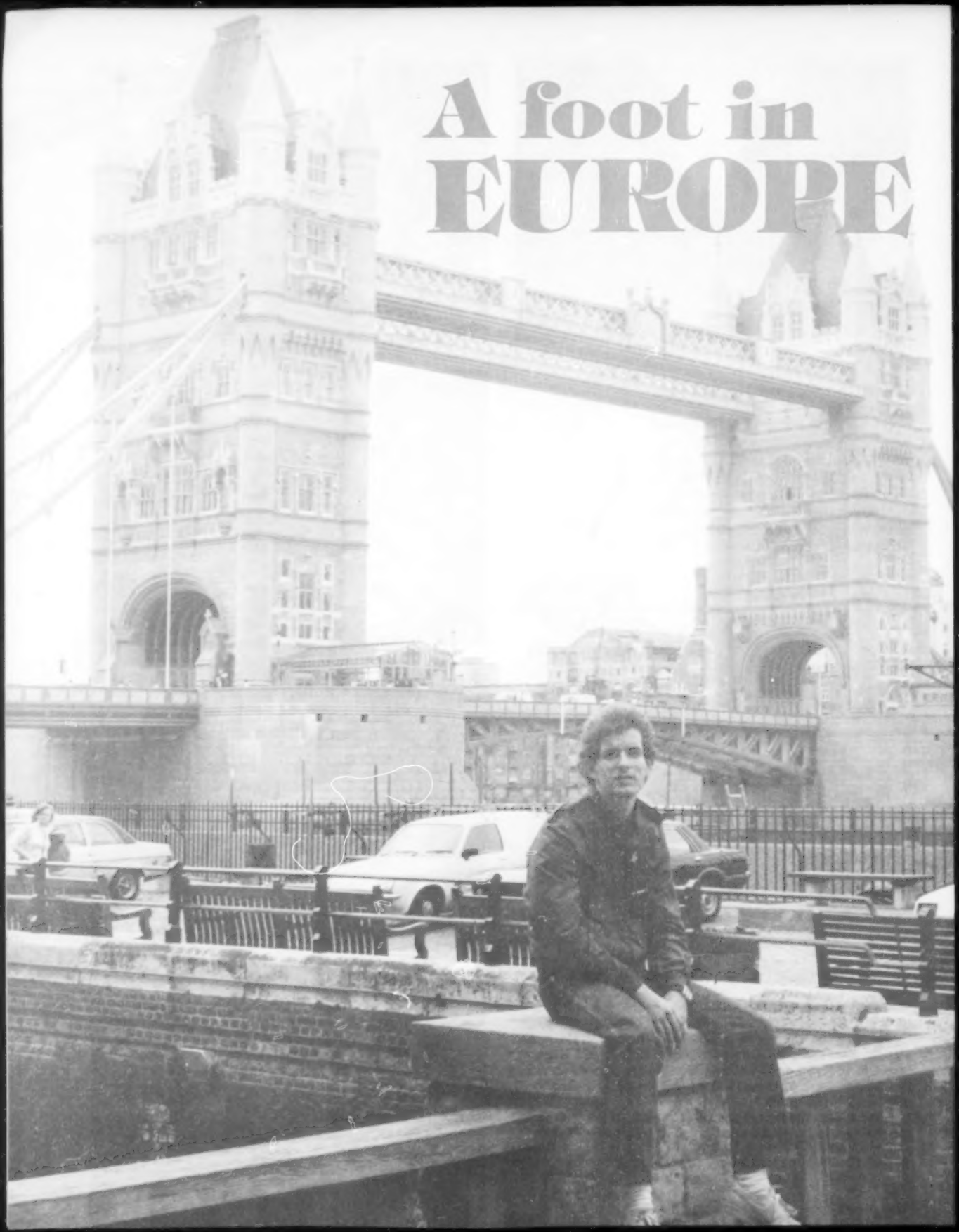


Alcohol and the Air Force

Bringing the drinking and driving problem a little closer to home, what is the cost to the Air Force?

In 1978, 54 Air Force people died from private motor vehicle accidents involving alcohol. Another 252 were injured. In 1979, 55 people died and 264 were injured. In 1980, the figures were 63 dead, 330 injured. In 1981, it rose to 73 dead and 370 injured.

And in only the first six months of 1982, 47 people died in alcohol-related crashes and 204 were injured.


A foot in
EUROPE

Photos by RICK SCHNEBLIN

If you're being transferred to a base in Europe, you might not have the bucks to take your car along, or to make any necessary changes so it'll meet local highway standards. And you might not want to pay the price for something to put in the gas tank — gas is twice as expensive over there, or more.

But we've got good news. You don't need the car to get around. Most countries in Europe are very heavy into mass transit.

A friend of ours, Rick Schneblin, visited the Netherlands last summer while touring with a rock band as its photographer, and he made a short side-trip to London.

He reported, "I told myself, 'I can't drive my car for *two months!*' That bothered me, but I didn't have any trouble getting around. In Holland the buses and electric trams will take you just about anywhere. And there are a lot of people on bikes, especially in the small towns.

"I didn't even need a car to get from country to country," he said. "I took a train into Belgium and a ferry across the English Channel to Great Britain, then another train to London. In London, I used the subway and the bus."

But, he warns travelers: "Even though there are a lot of pedestrians in Europe, it's still dangerous for the foot traffic. At home the pedestrian has the right of way. Over there, it's 'Pedestrian, get *out* of the way.' "

(left)
Our man in London, resting his feet.

continued

Bicycle traffic is so common in the Netherlands that there are traffic lights specifically designed to control their movement. The lower light is there for cyclists close to the corner so they don't have to twist their necks and look away from the traffic.

And there's a separate light to control the movement of pedestrians. See the little man in the light? It means the woman is crossing illegally. When the lower light is on, it shows a man walking.

This car is, of course, illegally parked. He tried to get as far off the street as he could so he wouldn't be hit. Most of the streets provide somewhere to park, although, of course, Amsterdam was planned without the car in mind.

(right)
Mass transit is very convenient in cities in the Netherlands. You can get virtually anywhere you want to go on the trams.

Walkers, bikers and mass transit mix together in Amsterdam.

The traffic in England moves in the opposite direction from how it goes here in the States. This creates some problems for the tourists. There are signs painted on the streets by the curbs that say "Look Right," because tourists are used to looking to the left for oncoming cars.

(right)
London has an extensive subway system, as opposed to Amsterdam's trams. They call it "the underground," or more familiarly "the tube," and you can see how appropriate that is.

(left)
This is Picadilly Circus in London. It's mostly just a lot of cars and pedestrians going every which way.

"yes, car batteries do BLOW UP"

by Lt. Col. PAUL D. SMITH
Chief of Safety
Aeronautical Systems Division
Wright Patterson AFB, OH

I have wondered what happens when a car battery explodes. Those instructions that tell you how to safely use jumper cables talk about it. And they say to wear goggles, but honestly now, how many times have you seen anyone wearing goggles while doing a jump start? Well, this is one guy who will be wearing them and doing it by the numbers. You see, that battery pictured here was mine and I was leaning over it close enough to read the fine print on the caution label when it did its imitation of a large gun going off in a small room.

But it wasn't a jump start that did it. (Listen up, all you backyard mechanics.) It was my *timing light*. This one happens to be of the AC variety that plugs into a trouble light or other AC power source. Normally I use the DC type that connects to the battery terminals and maybe that's why I was in the habit of using the battery as a little shelf on which to lay the timing light.

That's just what I did; laid the timing light on the battery, which is right up front in a Datsun, while I got everything ready and started the engine. The light has a plastic case so there was no chance of shorting out the battery terminals or anything dumb like that. So, I leaned over to get into position to aim the light at the timing marks on the damper, picked up the light, squeezed the trigger, and WHAM.

For a couple of seconds I couldn't figure out what had happened. My first thought was that something got into the fan. I knew something had hit me and made an awful lot of noise. As I turned back toward the car (from my closed eyed, crouching-to-get-away-from-what's-attacking-you position) I found myself looking into an open-topped battery. Just acid and plates were there and I thought to myself "so that's what they do when they blow up."

My next thought was a real concern for acid versus eyes. My eyes felt OK, but the little drops of acid glistening in my hair told me it had come pretty close. I rinsed off my face and hair with lots of water and added some baking soda as a neutralizer.

In retrospect, I was extremely lucky. The heavy timing light and my hand apparently deflected the battery top and kept it from hitting me in the face. And the battery top must have come up at just the right angle to aim the acid spray to the sides. (It was all around the battery.)

There are obviously a lot of other things that can generate sparks at the battery terminals besides jump starting. Hooking up a battery charger, disconnecting the cable clamps when there is an electrical load on the circuit, or inadvertently causing a short with a wrench when tightening the clamps will do it. A battery normally generates explosive hydrogen gas and it accumulates in the top of the battery. If this gas is escaping through the vents and comes across any of these spark sources, it will ignite and carry back to that hydrogen pocket in the battery, with the results as above.

Later, as I was cleaning the acid from the timing light, I noticed that it does have a warning label on the bottom that warns against using it closer than 18 inches to a floor. What this sticker really means is that the device is not explosive proof, i.e., it will ignite any kind of explosive atmosphere (as I demonstrated). The "18 inches off the floor" refers to gasoline vapors which accumulate and concentrate along floors. This is definitely something to keep in mind when working in any kind of garage or closed area. If there is *any possibility* of a gasoline leak or other source of vapors, no power tool (drill, electric impact wrench, etc.) should be used close to the floor.

Well, the safety business is all about passing on one person's painful (or dumb) experiences so that others don't have to repeat them. I was lucky to get out of this one for the cost of a new battery and a lot of messy acid cleanup. I hope this can help a few of you avoid a similar, and possibly far more painful, experience.

a BACKWARD GLANCE

(right)
Adjust your mirrors each time you get in the car, before you go anywhere, so you can check them with a quick glance and without too much head-turning.

(below)
The rearview mirror should be mounted either above or below the driver's eye level, to minimize the "blind spots," those areas the driver can't see from his mirrors.

(right)
Obviously, this right side mirror can't be adjusted while you're driving.

HEY, WANDA! Y'KNOW WHAT THESE HIEROGLYPHS SAY?
ARE YOU READY FOR THIS?
THEY SAY: "KING TOOT'S CARPORT... PREMISES-GUARDED-BY-A-NEAT-CURSE..."
THAT MUST BE WHY THIS GUY WANTS TO BORROW YOUR JUMP CABLES...
...OR HE'LL KILL YOU...
KING TOOT
King Toot Expedition
Shovels Digging Prop.
BUT... BUT... BUT... BUT YOU'RE 4000 YEARS OLD! ...YOU'RE DEAD!
NOT ME, MAN, WHY DO YOU THINK I'M WRAPPED-UP IN THESE SEAT BELTS? EH? EH?
TELL 'IM, WANDA...
BECAUSE SEAT BELTS ARE LIFE-SAVERS, SHOVELS, THAT'S WHY...
Y' KNOW SOMETHING? THAT'S VERY TRUE...
YOU SAID IT, M
NOW WHERE'S THE J
OR YOU WANT I S
SPEED UP THE
CLANK
CLANK
make it Click
SAUDI-ARABIA... THEY GROW OIL IN SAUDI-ARABIA. IT'S AN AGRICULTURAL COUNTRY AND MARCO POLOSAKI-SAN WANTED TO BUY THE CROP...
SO THAT'S HOW I SWAPPED FOR MY AWESOME 4-WHEEL-DRIVE AND THAT'S HOW THE SPHINX GOT IT'S NOSE BROKEN...
MAN, WHAT YOU ARE IS LOST!
... AND WHAT YOU WANT IS A MAP!
AH, SO... AND WHAT DO THE HONORABLE KING TOOT WANT?
SNIF
止まれ!
KWA-SAH!
I WONDER WHAT HE MEANT WHEN HE SAID: "DON'T FORGET TO BUCKLE-UP..."

WHAT'S GOING ON DOWN THERE, WANDA? WHAT GUY? JUMP CABLES... NONSENSE! THREATS... ABSURD! CUR...
...SES?
BUMP! BUMP! BUMP! BUMP
SHOVELS, HONEY, THIS IS KING TOOT... HE'S A MOMMY...
MUMMY, WANDA~ I'M A MUMMY...
CLANK

IT, MAC... HE JUMP CABLES? I SHOULD THE CURSE?
HIS 4-WHEEL-DRIVE IMPORT WON'T START, SHOVELS...
YOU DRIVE A 4000-YEAR-OLD-IMPORT?
YEP. GOT IT AT A SWAP MEET FROM A JAPANESE MERCHANT NAMED MARCO POLOSAKI-SAN. HE CAME STEAMIN' INTO THE NILE DELTA ONE DAY IN A BUCKET THAT WAS LOADED TO THE GUNNELS WITH 4-WHEEL-DRIVES, TELEVISION SETS AND TRANSISTOR RADIOS... AH, ME! MEMORIES, MEMORIES...
EXCUSE, PLEASE, THIS IS SAUDI-ARABIA?
HONTOYDAT-MARU
KELLEHER

SO I'VE STAYED BUCKLED-UP EVER SINCE AND THOSE BELTS REALLY WORK. THEN, AFTER MARCO POLOSAKI-SAN GAVE ME A NEW TRUCK AND MESSED-UP THE SPHINX'S CHIN, I HAD A BALL UNTIL I RAN OUT OF GAS — WHATEVER THAT IS. THAT'S WHEN I STARTED USING JUMP CABLES. WHEN YOU CUT-OFF THE CLAMPS, YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A POWER-SOURCE THAT REALLY MOVES YOU OUT!
T'S
THAT'S WHAT HE MEANT
DSTE
PLOOF!
WHEN YOU GONNA DO SOMETHIN' ABOUT THIS, MOSES?
CRACK!
I'M WORKIN' ON IT... I'M WORKIN' ON IT...

Gift SUGGESTIONS

Child restraint seats make excellent gifts.

Got somebody on your shopping list who's got everything? Take another look; they may not have it all. And some of what they do have may need to be replaced.

Of course the ideal gift for anyone with little children is a child restraint seat. Youngsters weighing less than 40 pounds should be using such seats when riding in any vehicle. In fact, in several states it's the law. Those over 40 pounds should use belts just like adults.

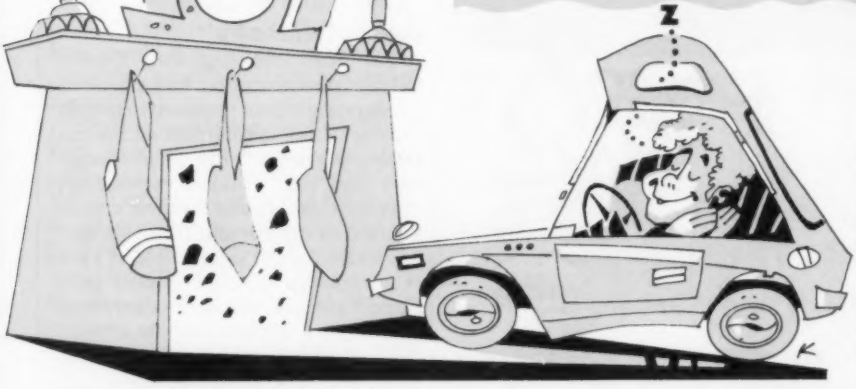
Gifts that have proved popular in recent years include license plate frames, alarm systems, car bras (padded vinyl covers that protect the front of cars from stones and bugs), car covers, tools, car care items, etc. But how about getting somebody a gift you hope they never have to use: a fire extinguisher. Along these same lines you could also buy them flares or other warning devices.

Want something inexpensive that keeps on giving? Windshield wiper blades are an ideal cheap gift. And if they don't need them right now, they will by spring. A bottle of windshield washer fluid makes a nice companion present.

If you want a little more personal touch to a gift that can go on giving for years, get that special somebody a

Motorcyclists are easy to buy for . . . if you know their size.

Special thanks to Dale's Modern Cycle and Prestige Foreign Car Parts of San Bernardino, Calif.



service manual for their latest set of wheels. There are individual manuals available for cars, trucks and motorcycles. In addition to repair details, these manuals provide excellent preventive maintenance tips.

Similarly, the Consumer Information Center has compiled DRIVER Magazine Backyard Mechanic articles into three volumes. They are available through CIC, Dept. 240J, Pueblo, CO 81009. Volume I (item number 101K) is $4.00, while Volumes II and III (numbers 102K and 103K) are $4.50 each.

Motorcyclists are among the easiest people to buy for. Most of their safety gear needs to be replaced regularly. Gloves, jackets, riding suits, special pants, boots, goggles, and face shields make great gifts. But most importantly, they need a new helmet every three years (although manufacturers claim their helmets are structurally sound for about five years). Besides it's always nice to have a spare helmet in case the first-line defenses get "tested." After all, helmets are one-use items.

You could remind the object of your gift that you thought of them by buying them a subscription to a cycle or car magazine. Or better yet, share DRIVER with them.

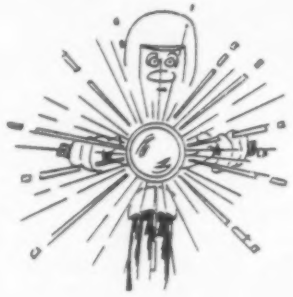
Remember when mail ordering or special ordering items, do it early.

RIGHT-TURN-ON-RED LAWS RAISE INTERSECTION TOLL

Nationwide adoption of right-turn-on-red laws has added significantly to the pedestrian and bicyclist crash toll at intersections controlled by traffic lights, a federal study has confirmed.

"Estimates of the magnitude of the increases ranged from 43 percent to 107 percent for pedestrian accidents and 72 percent to 123 percent for bicyclist accidents," the researchers said.

The increases, the researchers said, "could be directly attributed to the adoption" of RTOR.



MODULATING HEADLAMPS FOR MOTORCYCLES

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has proposed a safety standard amendment that would allow installation of a modulating headlamp on motorcycles. Such a headlamp, currently not allowed, could improve conspicuity of a motorcycle during daylight.

The proposal would allow a normally steady burning headlamp to be wired to modulate on the upper beam from higher to lower intensity at a pulse rate from 150 to 240 cycles per minute. The amended rule would specify which lamps are to be steady burning and which may flash.

About 75 percent of motorcycle accidents occur in daytime. It is assumed that if the cyclist were more visible to other traffic, fewer car/motorcycle collisions would occur.

Publishing of this proposed amendment in the *Federal Register* is an invitation for comment. NHTSA is particularly interested in comments from States and from individuals who have used these lamps, with emphasis on whether the modulating mode could cause a novice cyclist any trouble.

MSF MEETS IN '83

The Motorcycle Safety Foundation is now formulating programs for two regional meetings in 1983. Those in the East will meet August 3-5 in Indianapolis, Ind. Those west of the Mississippi will have their conference August 8-10 in Tucson, Ariz.

If you attended MSF's last big conference in Washington, D.C. in 1980, don't expect the same kind of program. The '83 meetings are being designed for instructors and program administrators and there will be less emphasis on research reports. DRIVER will provide additional details later in the winter.

POT TEST

Researchers at the Center for Human Toxicology, University of Utah, have developed simple chemical tests to detect the presence of marijuana in the urine of drivers. The study notes "growing concern that cannabis intoxication may contribute significantly to traffic accidents." Approximately 40 specimens can be analyzed by an experienced technician within a two-day period.

LIFE EXPECTANCY

The life expectancy of 16-to-24-year-olds has declined to the rate of 20 years ago, according to a member of the Presidential Commission on Drunk Driving. Dr. Morris E. Chafetz says that the experience of this age group is the sole exception since all other groups have shown "a remarkable increase in life expectancy." The primary reason is that young people are dying in traffic accidents at an unprecedented rate. Chafetz said that 75% of deaths in the 16-to-24 age group results from vehicle accidents attributed to alcohol or drugs.

CONVEX MIRRORS

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has amended its rearview mirror standard to permit the use of convex mirrors on the exterior, passenger side of passenger cars and light trucks. Previously, only flat (plane) outside mirrors could be used to supplement an inside mirror which did not satisfy field of view requirements. General Motors petitioned for the change, contending that convex mirrors provide a wider field of view than flat mirrors of the same size. The amendment specifies certain restrictions: radius of curvature shall not exceed 65 inches; radius of curvature shall not be less than 35 inches; measured radius of curvature may not vary more than 12.5 percent from mean radius of curvature; and the words "Objects in Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear" must be etched on the lower portion of the glazing.

the fingernail caper

Former international driving champion Jackie Stewart had been leaning against the room divider during most of the press conference's question and answer session. Although he had answered a few questions early in the conference, the media was directing most of their fire at Ford Motor Company president Donald E. Petersen. Economic questions; product questions; market questions; the press droned on.

When the questioning turned to air bags and other passive safety restraints, Stewart began to get restless. Restless enough that it appeared he might jump right into the middle of the discussion. However, the tone of the questions and answers waned, and Stewart restrained himself.

As a rule, Grand Prix drivers are cold, critical, detached, reserved, stable, relaxed, resourceful, self-disciplined, orderly decision makers. And Stewart is among the cream of Grand Prix pilots, having won the Formula 1 world championship three times, posting victories in 27 of 99 Grand Prix events in which he competed — a record unmatched in the history of the sport.

There is something else that Grand Prix drivers are known for: not appearing to become emotionally involved in any subject. But there are limits to which any individual can be pushed — even Grand Prix drivers. And Stewart reached his limit toward the end of the question and answer session.

A woman correspondent was pressing Petersen about women consultants. She wanted to know if Ford was going to continue to be concerned with design issues such as switches that might break fingernails.

Stewart had remained silent as long as he could. Politely, but nonetheless firmly, he stepped forward and wondered aloud why, in a country where only one in 10 people wear seat belts, people were more concerned with fingernails than their lives.

Jackie Stewart, best known to Americans as a motorsports commentator for one of the major networks is a three-time world driving champion with an outspoken view on seat belts.

"As a race driver," Stewart commented, "I know that safety belts save lives. They've saved mine several times.

"I don't understand why Americans don't wear them," The Scottish driver continued. "In many countries around the world it is the law.

"Women often ask me if they should wear seat belts," the Mod Scot added. "I tell them if they can afford $50-75,000 for plastic surgery then they can afford not to."

This outburst seemed to puzzle some members of the fourth estate. The audience was speechless.

Stewart seized the momentary lull to expound a further virtue of passenger restraints.

"Many of the severe auto accident injuries occur in a second collision," Stewart declared.

"Well, actually it's the third and fourth collisions. The first collision is when the car hits an object, the second happens when the driver and passengers hit something inside the car — hopefully it's a safety restraint." Stewart was referring to the car hitting one object or another car and then bouncing or careening into something else.

"So if you are wearing a safety restraint," Stewart concluded, "there's a good chance that you can regain control of the car and avoid the second collision altogether."

THE ultimate BACKYARD MECHANICS

There are many reasons why racers can safely drive so much faster than you and I do. Not the least of these are their superior skills and the specialized vehicles they use. But successful drivers need more than their own skills and fast cars to win. They also need a crew of dedicated

After the first starting routine, "hot" starting plugs are put in, the engine started and warmed up for perhaps 10 minutes. Then the engine is switched off.

(right)
The "hot" plugs come out, and in go "cold" plugs that will be needed to run the car. These plugs are very carefully torqued.

mechanics. The ultimate backyard mechanics, if you will. Mechanics dedicated to safety.

Such dedication shows in the day-to-day life of Championship Auto Racing Team (CART) mechanics like those working for Jim Hall's Pennzoil March Chaparral team.

They arrive at their garage around 7 a.m. and go about the jobs they know have to be done before the track opens for practice at 10. The first person in usually turns on and dips electric heating elements into the oil and water in the race car. To attempt to start the engine before the fluids have some temperature in them would severely damage the engine.

At around 9 o'clock the engine man inserts a starting device in the back of the engine to spin it over. He makes sure the eight spark plugs are out to make it easy to turn the engine over and get the oil pressure up right away.

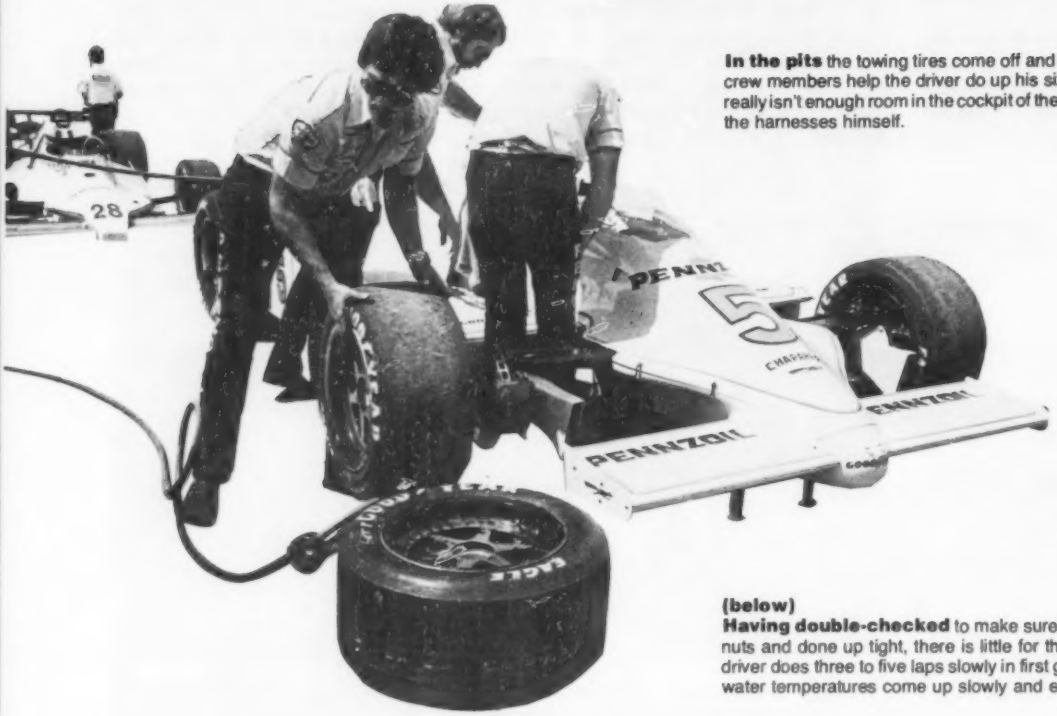
continued

(left and above)
Mechanically this is a relatively simple job, but it's not for a beginner. The tires must all be checked for wear and pressure, and the rolling diameters marked on each. The wheels are also routinely checked for cracks and other signs of possible weakness.

The race car is towed to the fuel dump, pits, and back to the garage again by a golf cart that also carries equipment back and forth. The garage-to-fuel-dump-to-pits-and-back-again trip will probably be done four to six times a day.

At the fuel dump the tank is filled to a predetermined level. This is important because a full 40-gallon load of methanol (methyl alcohol) weighs almost 260 pounds and could be a big factor in the handling of the car.

continued



In the pits the towing tires come off and racing tires go on while other crew members help the driver do up his six-point safety harness. There really isn't enough room in the cockpit of the March 82C for the driver to do the harnesses himself.

(below)
Having double-checked to make sure the wheels are on the wheel nuts and done up tight, there is little for the mechanics to do while the driver does three to five laps slowly in first gear to make sure that oil and water temperatures come up slowly and evenly.

(left)
The mechanics and car owner Jim Hall swarm over as soon as Johnny Rutherford stops in the pits to discuss the run, paying attention to engine revs reached and many other factors.

(below)
While the crew makes some adjustments, a Goodyear tire engineer measures tire size and temperatures. That data and what J.R. tells the crew about how the car "feels" tells them everything about how the car is handling, especially when plotted against lap times.

continued

continued

When practice is finished for them, they check and record their suspension settings, check the engine over, inspect the gearbox and go over the car to make sure everything is shipshape. When the hundreds of sundry items that require attention have been taken care of and marked off the check list, they cover the car, lock the doors to the garage and go home, usually around 7 p.m.

You might imagine the routine is different on race day. Well it is and it isn't. The day starts early with the mechanics finishing their chores, getting all the pit equipment to the assigned pit, organizing it, checking all the tires, looking at the car for the

100th time, wondering if they have missed something which could cause a problem, going over and over all the loosely laid plans for fuel stops, etc., knowing full well that any plans they make usually change during the race.

(above)
Johnny Rutherford qualified the Pennzoil March Chaparral 82C 16th for the AirCal 500 at Riverside, Calif. The car that had been in the teams stable for less than a week finished the 500-kilometer race in third place.

(right)
Two-way radios are an important communications link between the crew in the pits and the driver on the track.

(left)
Refueling stops are critical, not only to race positioning but to safety because of the danger of fire. The mechanics all wear Nomex underwear as does the CART official observing the stop. They also wear fire resistant coveralls, and those directly involved with fueling wear helmets with overlapping neck-shoulder shields.

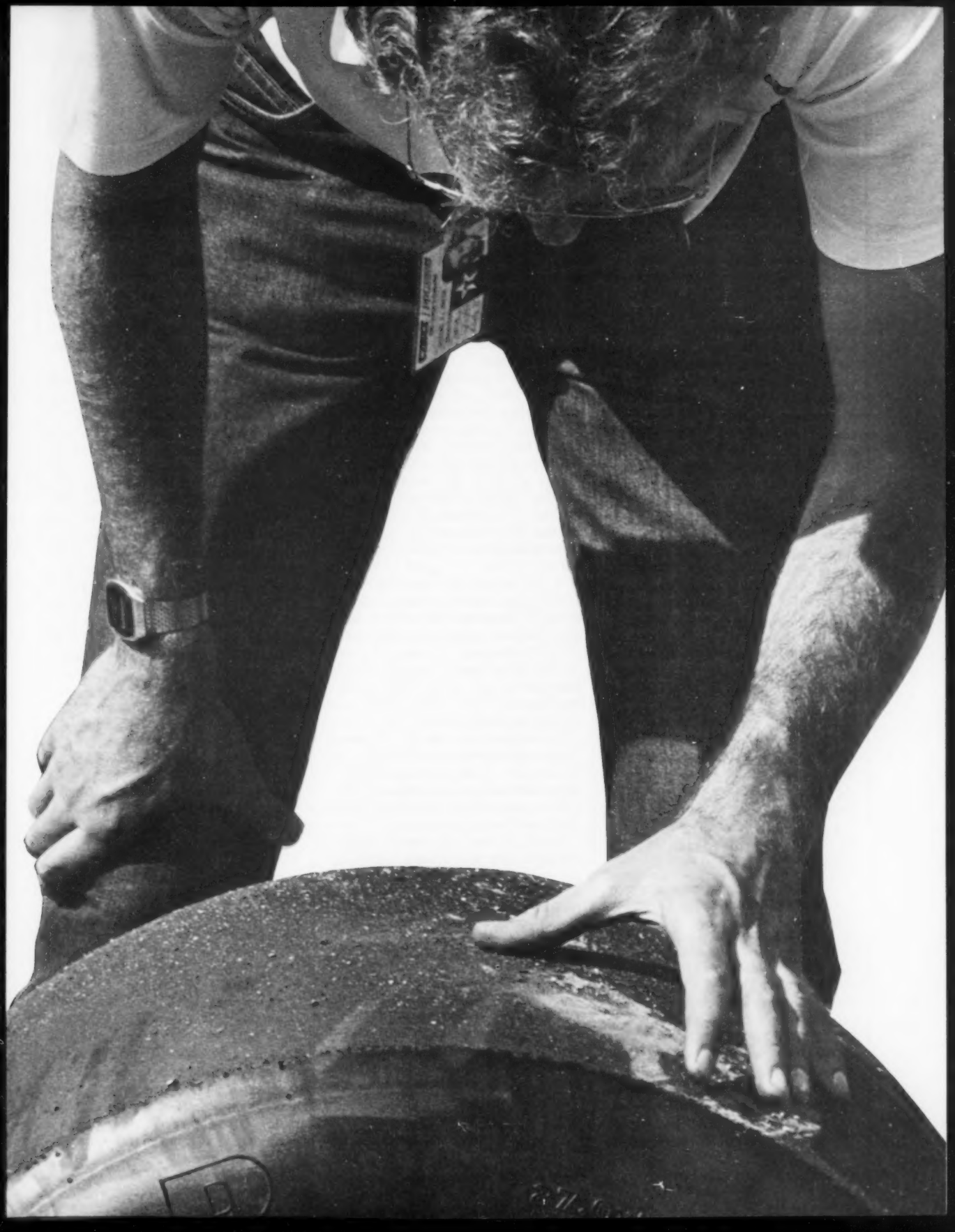
continued

(above, left)
Mechanics don't work only on machines. Rutherford broke his hand in a previous race and the splint came loose early in the Riverside event. So during his second pit stop, one of the mechanics came to his aid with adhesive tape — again under the watchful eyes of an official.

(above, right)
Communications are just as important among the pit crew as they are between the crew and the on-track driver. Conferences such as this take place after each pit stop.

(right)
Whenever tires come off a racing car they get a careful examination by tire engineers.

(left)
After a race and the car has been parked, the mechanics collapse.



Backfire
LETTERS to the EDITOR

FLIPPANTLY

I wish to take issue with the comment you made in reply to SSgt. Baynard's letter in the June '82 DRIVER. I happen to be one of those who has learned from experience that the center of the lane is not the place to be — visibility notwithstanding — if you ride a motorcycle.

I know, because I dumped my bike about a year ago when I crossed the center of the lane while maneuvering to the outside of the curve, and slid on the oil buildup there. Granted, it had rained the night before and raised all of that grease out of the concrete. And obviously I was going too fast for conditions, although I was within the speed limit and was not performing any wild maneuvers. I was in control until I hit the slick; when I did, I was down and into the bushes (soft ones, luckily) before I knew what happened.

In light of this experience I am upset, to put it mildly, that a publication of your stature and (usually) common sense can so flippantly dismiss this specific hazard as an "old wives tale." It's a disservice to all the other riders who may believe it because they haven't yet crashed and burned because of it.

I, for one will stay off the center slick, rain or shine, and take my chances with visibility.

Capt. S.W. Clarke, USMC
MCRD San Diego CA 92140

There is no one place that is best to ride. Every situation requires a different solution. For visibility, riding in the center of the lane is best; but not necessarily is it the best place to ride all the time. Likewise, avoiding the center of the lane all the time because you once made several mistakes including transitioning on a curve and going too fast for conditions is not wise. By the way, motorcycle safety experts list the center of the lane taboo under "old wives tales," which tells you where we got our June Backfire reply.

WHERE TO GO

In your "Freeway Star" article (August 1982) you talked about car breakdowns and what to do. I'd like to add some comments.

If your car breaks down, get out and get away, as you said. But *where* to get away is just as important. Neither the area in front of nor in back of the car is safe. If possible, get on the other side of the guardrail. Otherwise, get *very* far away from the car.

A few years back I read where two children had been killed after a drunk driver plowed into the back of their disabled car, and rammed it into the children standing in front of the car. All too often I see people standing in front or in back of disabled cars on the freeway. I just don't think they realize the dangers involved.

The other comment is concerning women who are alone when their car is disabled. Your picture shows a man with the woman at the call box, but we aren't always lucky enough to travel with other people.

During a rape prevention class I attended, the instructors told us to get out of the car and head for the nearest bush, tree, or other camouflage. Come out only when a marked police car or tow truck arrives. Any other car could spell trouble, no matter how nice the person may look. If there are no places to hide, and there is no town near enough to walk to, stand outside the car but be ready to jump back in and lock the doors if anyone but a police officer or your tow truck pulls up. It's sad, but you just don't know who to trust nowadays.

Capt. Adele L. Fergus-O'Brien, USAF
Norton AFB CA 92409

THE RIGHT STUFF

To many people the right stuff has to do with being a fighter pilot. I believe the right stuff also has to do with driving. It takes the right stuff to be a good driver and the basic ingredient in this right stuff is attitude.

I have driven everything from two-wheelers to 18-wheelers and have seen our nations highways become more crowded and with it a noticeable change in attitudes. Much of this change is probably due to the fact we have evolved from a nation of sightseers to a nation of commuters.

Far too many drivers on the road today have a bad attitude toward anyone or anything that gets in their way. There are all types of drivers in all types of vehicles on the road and, as I see it, all have equal rights. What the American driver needs is more compassion for the other guy, an extra dash of understanding, some thoughts on safety, a dose of courtesy and a generous portion of patience — that's the right stuff.

I for one would like to challenge everyone to start a driving revolution — show the other driver that you have the RIGHT STUFF. Who knows, it might be contagious!

Maj. Terry E. Paasch, USAF
Hill AFB UT 84056

SPORTSCAR SEATBELTS

I've been involved in sports cars and sports car racing over the past 24 years, and have installed seat belts in every car that I've owned which was not delivered with them.

The first time the belts saved me was on a dark, rainy night. I was driving a 1951 MG-TD and entered a 90 degree right-hand turn at a speed which would've ordinarily been manageable. Unfortunately, water was washing across the road in the middle of the turn. The car began a brisk spin, hanging the tail out about

45 degrees to the left. I stayed on the power gently and counter-steered, and the car responded nicely. Unfortunately I ran out of road and smacked a telephone pole broadside at about the location of the instrument panel. Injuries? A cracked knuckle (with which I broke the windscreen) and a slight scratch on my scalp from contact with one of the convertible top bows. The car was a total loss.

Some years later, I was driving a 1961 MGA roadster to work on a rainy morning when a young girl ran a stoplight at an intersection I was entering. I knew I was going to center-punch her solidly. I slid my hands up to the top of the wheel and a split second before impact, rested my forehead on them. The front end of my car had to be completely rebuilt, but I walked away without a scratch.

The third time the belts saved me was during the first lap of a race at Indianapolis Raceway Park (a sports car racing track with 15 turns in each 2½ mile lap). I was racing a Showroom Stock Class C Ford Fiesta and was in the middle of a pack in a hard left turn. The car behind me lost control and hit my left rear end, rotating me counter-clockwise into a spin off the track to the left. I impacted a tirewall and the car was thrown into the air so hard that another car drove under me. I came down on the wheels and completely smashed the seat, and the front and rear suspensions. The frame of the car was bent and the only undamaged panels on it were the driver's side door, the roof, and the hood. Again, I walked away from it.

On the road or on the track, belts are the cheapest medical and life insurance you can buy.

R.E. Van Patten
Wright-Patterson AFB, OH 45433

EQUAL TIME

Mr. Hammarstrom's letter about bicyclists in your August 1982 issue put me on a slow burn. How about some equal time?

What do you do with a driver who:

Blows his horn at you after he flies by when you're pedaling up a winding and hilly road?

Seldom obeys a stop or yield sign when he sees you coming?

Ignores you as being a part of oncoming traffic and passes the car anyway?

Zips past you only to make a right turn in front of you?

Who is this person that forces others to take evasive action and sometimes dangerous maneuvers to insure their not being killed?

It's none other than a motor vehicle driver. For everyone who doesn't fit this picture, there are hundreds more who do.

Mr. Hammarstrom's letter to BACKFIRE was an unfair misrepresentation of the bicycling majority. Anyone who pedals the way he describes certainly must have a death-wish, and surely won't have a very long life expectancy.

Most cyclists are well aware that a body on 35 pounds of tubing won't stand a chance against a ton of rolling steel and glass.

Don't be afraid of us, because we're watching out for you.

Walt Mistler
Cycle Touring International Member
APO San Francisco, CA 96519

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

See if you have ever been guilty of any of the symptoms I had which lead to my unfortunate accident.

I was departing the base, on leave, about one hour behind my schedule, thinking about reservations, tickets for the amusement park, enough money, etc., when I rammed into the rear of a large truck.

I was driving approximately 25 miles per hour, thinking about everything except what I was doing, when a truck made a sudden stop in front of me, and I didn't notice him in time. Not being fully attentive to my driving at that moment was bad, but not having seat belts on was much worse. I had a safety bumper and a collapsible steering wheel and was "only" going 25 mph.

I drove my chest into the steering wheel, my head hit the roof and upper windshield, and both knees drove into the dashboard. One of the instrument switches penetrated my left leg, resulting in seven stitches. I am in a neck brace, have a very sore chest and back, and lacerations on my forehead.

Fortunately there were no broken bones, and I will probably recover quickly, but I've ruined my car (my 1981 Toyota sustained $3,000 in damage), my leave, and my physical condition just because I didn't take 10 seconds to buckle-up. I use seat belts often, mainly on the highway, on trips, etc., but who would ever suspect one could inflict so much damage on base at 25 mph?

I sincerely hope you will all learn from my experience rather than your own. Buckle-em-up — every — time — PLEASE!

Lt. Col. David Hendrick
Andrews AFB, Washington D.C.

Address your letters to:
Editor
DRIVER Magazine
AFISC/SEDD
Norton AFB CA 92409

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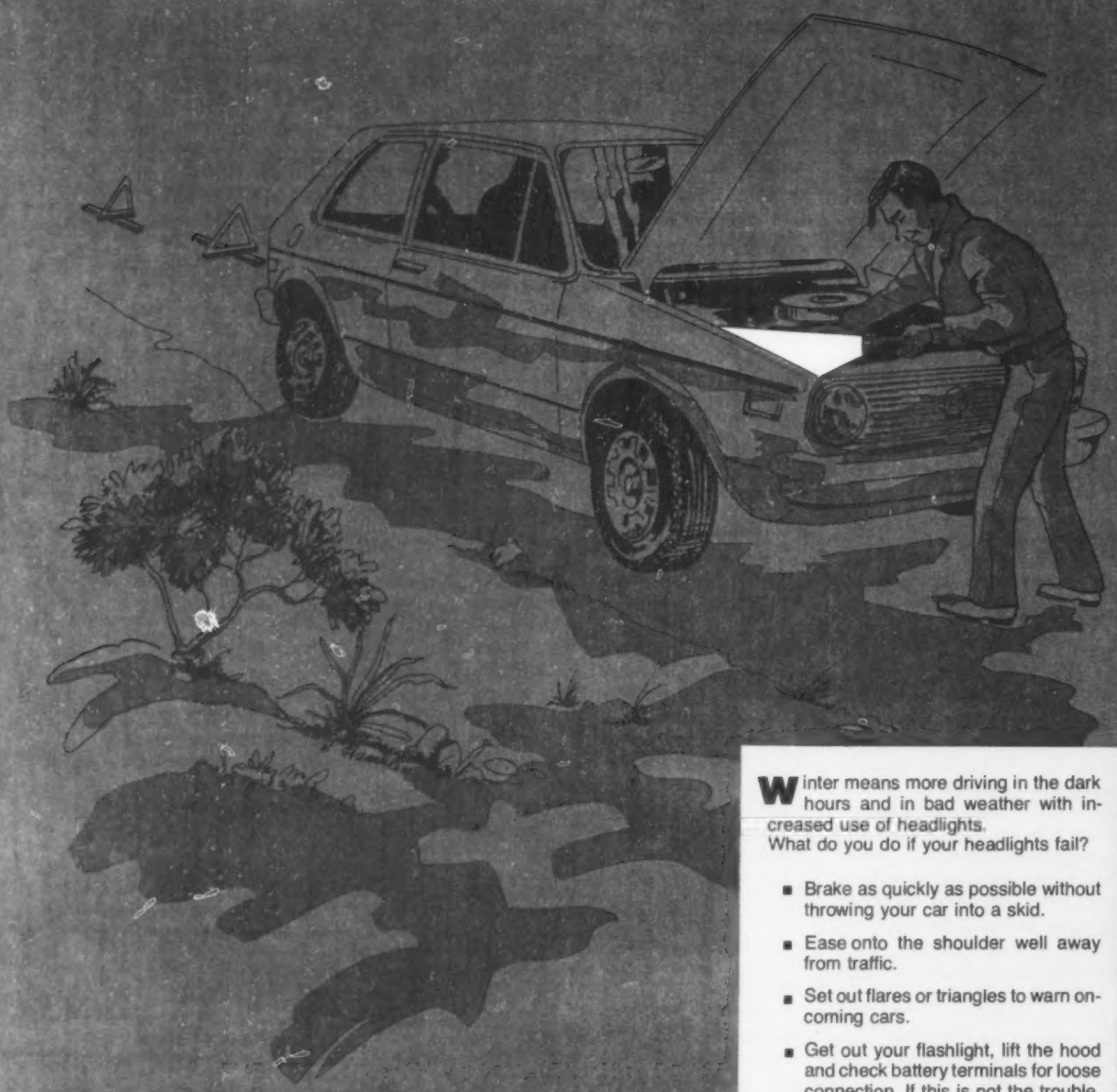
HEADLIGHT FAILURE!



Winter means more driving in the dark hours and in bad weather with increased use of headlights.
What do you do if your headlights fail?

- Brake as quickly as possible without throwing your car into a skid.
- Ease onto the shoulder well away from traffic.
- Set out flares or triangles to warn oncoming cars.
- Get out your flashlight, lift the hood and check battery terminals for loose connection. If this is not the trouble, send for help.

NEVER DRIVE AT NIGHT WITHOUT LIGHTS.